

## MINUTES – JUNE 24, 2004

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners reconvened its meeting at the Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 24, 2004. Members present: Mel O. Battle, Chairman, Larry G. Hamlett, Vice-Chairman, Nathaniel Hall, Jack W. Hooper, Cathy W. Lucas, Kenneth D. Travis, and George W. Ward, Jr. Also present: Jeffrey H. Earp, County Manager and Gwen Y. Vaughn, Finance Officer. Wanda P. Smith, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

### BUDGET WORK SESSION

The Board held a work session on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2004-2005.

Mr. Jeff Earp, County Manager, updated the Board on the adjustments that had been made to the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 up to this point. Mr. Earp stated that the proposed budget as it is currently has decreased the proposed tax rate from his recommendation of \$.61 to \$.5967.

After considerable discussion, Commissioner Hooper stated that he would rather see the Board adopt a tax rate of \$.61 and, hopefully, create a reserve that could address some of the needs that arise and that are being ignored.

Commissioner Ward stated that maybe the Board needed to go back and possibly cut more, even if it meant eliminating the new positions being proposed.

Commissioner Lucas stated that she thought the Board would be very remiss if the tax rate was not dropped by the amount of the deductions already come up with by the Board. Commissioner Lucas added that she had hoped to go back and address the Department of Social Services again and some of the new positions being proposed. Commissioner Lucas noted that she had requested that the County Finance Officer run a current Revenue report and with this could adjust the numbers even more.

Commissioner Hall stated that he agreed with Commissioner Hooper in his comments and would support a \$.61 tax rate to address a lot of the County's needs that are being ignored, and if there were any savings, that it go into the County's Fund Balance.

Commissioner Travis stated that he would support the recommendation of \$.5967.

Commissioner Hamlett stated that he would support the recommendation of \$.5967.

Commissioner Lucas stated that she would like to see the Board readdress Revenues and look further at spending.

Commissioner Ward stated that he would like to see an additional cent taken off of the proposed tax rate which would set the tax rate at \$.5867.

Commissioner Travis stated that the Board of Commissioners has spent money all year long and when the time comes to vote on the budget, all seven Board members may not vote the same way, but all seven voted to spend the money. Commissioner Travis stated to Commissioner Lucas that he did not appreciate the article that she put in the newspaper because she had just as much to do with what money the Board spent this year as anyone else. Commissioner Lucas took issue with this and stated that she understood why he would be upset. Commissioner Travis then stated that he was through with Commissioner Lucas for now. Further discussion took place, after which Commissioner Lucas inquired if comments made toward her were intended as a threat and Commissioner Travis clarified his position.

Chairman Battle stated that this is the eighth budget with which he has worked as a County Commissioner and has learned that there are some items that the Board has to fund such as Human Services, which receives the largest portion of the budget. Chairman Battle added that the Sheriff's Department, DSS, and Health Department also receive a large portion of the budget, which is then followed by Schools. Chairman Battle stated that if the Board does not give County employees a raise, it would be wrong. Chairman Battle added that he could support a tax rate of \$.5967.

Chairman Battle stated that at this point Commissioners Travis, Hamlett, and he support a \$.5967 tax rate, Commissioners Hall and Hooper support a \$.61 tax rate, Commissioner Ward supports a \$.5867 tax rate, and Commissioner Lucas would like to look at further cuts, what the Board has added, and look at Revenues. Commissioner Lucas stated that she would like added to this to look at revenue neutral and only base additional spending on sales tax projections and increase in the base for next year.

Commissioner Hall stated that with three Commissioners recommending a \$.5967 tax rate, he would support a \$.60 tax rate.

Commissioner Lucas stated that there are two issues that were left unresolved for her, even though a consensus may have been taken, with one being a possible decrease in Medicaid. Chairman Battle clarified that this issue was resolved with it being pointed out that Commissioner Lucas wished to cut \$100,000 from Medicaid. Commissioner Lucas stated that she would like to readdress the new Human Services Assistant position in the Administration budget. The County Manager clarified that Administration – Salaries included the Human Services Assistant position with an annual salary of up to \$24,000 and with fringe benefits the total would be \$31,554. After further discussion, Commissioner Lucas moved, seconded by Chairman Battle to delete the proposed Human Services Assistant position from the 2004-2005 budget.

Commissioner Ward stated that if one of the new positions is going to be deleted, then all of the new positions should be deleted.

Upon a vote of the motion, the motion failed by a vote of six to one with Commissioners Battle, Hamlett, Hall, Hooper, Travis, and Ward voting no.

Commissioner Hooper moved, seconded by Commissioner Hall that the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 be set at \$.60. The motion carried by a vote of four to three with Commissioners Hamlett, Lucas, and Ward voting no.

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Hooper that the amount of \$42,046, which is the difference in the proposed tax rate of \$.61 and the adopted tax rate of \$.60, go into Fund Balance. The motion carried by a vote of six to one with Commissioner Lucas voting no.

#### CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Battle stated to Commissioner Lucas that he was personally disappointed in a letter she had recently published in the newspaper.

#### RECESS

At 9:30 a.m. Chairman Battle moved, seconded by Commissioner Ward to recess the meeting until Monday, June 28, 2004, at 6:30 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

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Wanda P. Smith  
Clerk to the Board

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M. O. Battle  
Chairman

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